

Aggielife

CAMAC acts as support for Mexican-American students

BY KATIE MISH
The Battalion

Hispanic culture is alive and well on the Texas A&M Campus. There are over 20 Hispanic oriented groups including organizations in the engineering and journalism departments, six traditionally Latino-based sororities and fraternities, the Ballet Folklorico and a hometown club from the Rio Grande Valley.

The Committee for the Awareness of Mexican-American Culture is another of these organizations, dedicated to the education and celebration of Mexican culture.

Angie Castro, program adviser for CAMAC, said when the organization was founded in 1974, the main focus was a support system for Mexican-American students but it has branched out since then.

"It has grown into a programming committee," Castro said. "It is responsible for traditional programs such as Diez y Seis, which is a celebration of Mexico's independence from Spain, El Dia de los Muertos, where we remember our dead, and Las Posadas, which marks Joseph and Mary's visit to various houses."

Castro said CAMAC also works toward student development and helping students find a place where they belong.

"The support network is still there," she said. "We

want to help people find their niche, either in our organization or in other Hispanic organizations on campus."

Castro said membership has declined as the number of Hispanic groups has increased but CAMAC is working to bring more participation to the group.

She said the organization had 50 people at its first meeting, and it is hoping to retain those individuals and involve them in the various subcommittees offered.

Castro said CAMAC is also working to increase the organization's membership to include many different types of students.

"It is an open committee for anyone who is interested," she said. "We're trying to work on diversifying our membership on an active level, on a regular basis."

"We encourage anyone who is interested in learning more about the Mexican-American culture to get involved or at least come to our programs."

CAMAC also works to improve the Bryan-College Station community, with its mentoring program and by involving the community in some of their traditional programs.

CAMAC will have a celebration of Diez y Seis tomorrow from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Rudder Fountain. In the case of rain, the festival will move to rooms 212-224 in the MSC.

HERITAGE

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"The importance of Diez y Seis for Mexicans and Mexican Americans is that it's the first time that the residents of Mexico of Spanish ancestry united with the people of indigenous ancestry against the colonial power of Spain," Huerta said.

"That really was the first example of the mestizo tradition in Mexico, the unification of the Spanish blood with the indigenous blood and that's why it's such an important event."

Besides learning about the history behind the diverse population that makes up the Hispanic Culture, there are other things people can do to observe Hispanic Heritage month.

Huerta said taking time out to read the newspaper can be a way to learn about Hispanic culture.

"There are a lot of Latino issues in the news like bilingual education and different propositions (concerning the Hispanic Community) that are coming up," she said.

Huerta said going to festivities offering varieties of foods from different Hispanic cultures during Hispanic Heritage Month and learning their different dances, is not always enough to truly learn about the culture.

"Just knowing how to eat Mexican food and realizing that it's good stuff is not enough," Huerta said. "It takes a little bit of work and effort."

Other things one can do to observe Hispanic Heritage Month could be to read books on Hispanic culture. One interesting book is *Everything You Need to Know about Latino History* by Himilce Novas, which answers many of the commonly asked questions regarding the Hispanic community.

Events held by different Hispanic groups on campus will also be held throughout the month, which will be open to anyone wanting to attend.

Tonight's Unity Rally at Rudder Fountain sponsored by the Hispanic Presidents Council will be the first.



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